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5,464,465), the agglomerate is vacuum filtered<sup>2</sup> until the moisture level is 9.13%. The agglomerate is formed by mixing 15 parts of iron ore (@ 8.7% moisture) with 12.5 parts of water<sup>3</sup>, so the added water is around 45 % ((12.5\*100)/(15+12.5)). 45 % water is outside (~10 times) the range of claim 1, as currently amended. Additionally, claim 1 does not require the step of vacuum filtering. From the teachings of Avotins, the optimum level of water is 45%, which further requires the additional step of vacuum filtering the agglomerate. Applicants discloses a much lower level of water and no vacuuming step. Applicant's invention is obvious in light of Avotins

Claim 1 is amended to read "*consisting of*" instead of "comprising", therein excluding acrylonitrile fibers as recited by Avotins.

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Crowe, Canadian patent No. 1002761, in view of Avotins. Both Crowe and Avotins teach that water is separated from the agglomerate forming a moist agglomerate that would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to further consists of "feeding the green briquettes into a rotary hearth furnace"<sup>4</sup>. There is no intermediate step between forming the briquette and

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<sup>2</sup> US 5,464,465, col 6 line 4.

<sup>3</sup> US 5,464,465, col 6 line 7

<sup>4</sup>rotary hearth furnace- page 11, line 3

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feeding the briquette into the furnace. Avotins describes vacuum filtering the agglomerate, and Crow describes an oven drying process at 250° F<sup>5</sup>. Crowe's briquette contains a much higher percent of moisture, on the order of 14.8%, and his briquette requires pre-drying prior to charging an iron making furnace. Crowe does not teach the utility of utilizing a reductant in combination with a cellulosic fiber. Avotins does not teach the utility of combining a reductant with iron oxide, along with a binder and with a small amount of water for the purposes of in situ metallization in a rotary hearth furnace. Amended claim 1 includes the limitation of *feeding the green briquettes into a rotary hearth furnace*. Applicants respectfully asserts that claim 1 as here within amended traverses the Examiner's rejections. Dependent claims 2, and 4-13 depend on claim 1, and contain all the limitations thereof, and respectfully also transverse the rejections.

In view of the foregoing Amendment and these Remarks, which are consistent with the Interview on March 28, 2003, this Application is now believed to be in condition for allowance and such favorable action is respectfully requested on behalf of the Applicant(s). No new matter has been added, and the amendments and arguments are documented in the footnotes.

Since the amendment to the claims add no more claims than previously paid for, no additional fees are required for the claims.

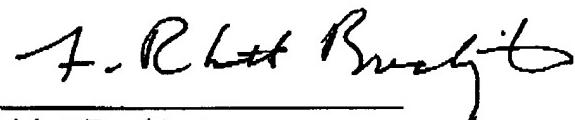
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<sup>5</sup>US 2,865,731 - col 2 line 68

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Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version With Markings to Show Changes Made".

Respectfully submitted,



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**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

**In the Claims:**

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A process for making metallized iron by reduction of iron oxide from green briquettes, said process consisting of comprising:

combining iron bearing materials forming a mixture that is substantially iron oxide, a reductant, cellulose fiber, and 0% to 5% added water by weight of the mixture;

compacting the mixture into green briquettes;

feeding the green briquettes into a rotary hearth furnace; and

heating the green briquettes at a temperature of from about 1000° C to about 1550° C for a period of 6 to 20 minutes, therein metallizing iron forming metallized briquettes.

Claims 3 and 14-20 have been cancelled.